

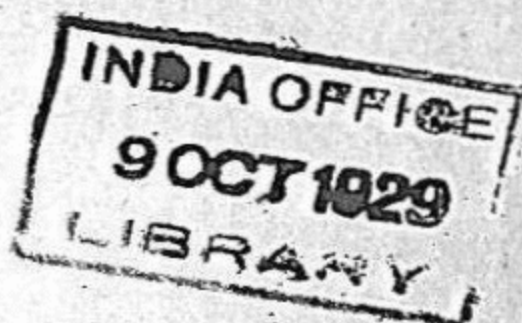
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THE LIFE

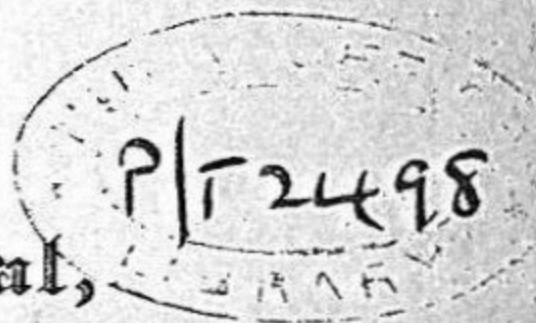
OF



BHAI NAND LAL GOYA.

BY

Bhai Ram Dyal,



Superintendent Deputy Commissioner's Office,

GURDASPUR.

1st Edition } 1,000 copies { Price 4 annas.





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## INTRODUCTION.

The Society has much pleasure in presenting this booklet to the public. It is written by Bhai Ram Dyal, Superintendent Deputy Commissioner's office, Gurdaspur. He is a descendent of Bhai Nand Lal and the account given by him of his great ancestor is most authentic as the facts related have been handed down in the family from generation to generation. The public is already indebted to the writer's father, Bhai Megh Raj Government Pensioner, Multan, who has published translations of Bhai Nand Lal's works in Panjabi poetry. The Society offers its most grateful thanks to the learned author for his kindness in handing over this manuscript to us.

In the end a few extracts from the writings of Bhai Nand Lal are appended to give the reader a specimen of his poetry.

**Harnam Singh M. A., B. Sc.,**

*Secretary,*

**THE SIKH TRACT SOCIETY,**

**Khalsa College, Amritsar.**

# Life of Bhai Nand Lal.

## BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

Nowhere in Sikh History is there any account of the life of Bhai Nand Lal except in *Gur Partap Suraj* by Bhai Santokh Singh, and that too is very brief. I venture to put before the readers an account of the life of Bhai Nand Lal as preserved in our family and which nearly corresponds with the essentials of the sketch given by Bhai Santokh Singh. The account given relates to about 1700 Bikrami era.

In the town of Ghazni in Afghanistan, there lived Munshi Chhaju Ram, a Khatri by caste, who acted as a Diwan to the then Nawab of Ghazni. The Nawab had every trust in him, and all civil, military and revenue departments were under his guidance and control. Up to the age of fifty years no child of his survived for more than two or three years. At fifty one, however, a son was born to him who was named Nand Lal, but his birth was not celebrated with any show because there was no guarantee of long life for him.



When Nand Lal was six years old, a Maulvi was engaged to teach him Persian which was the court language of the country. He also learnt Arabic. As the boy was very intelligent and smart, he became a good scholar even while he was in his teens.

Diwan Chhaju Ram was a follower of Gosain Rama Nand, the founder of the Bairagi sect. When Nand Lal was twelve years old, his father fixed a day for the ceremony of *kanthi* (wearing a string of beads round the neck). He invited his Guru and other Bairagies to a dinner, and many other poor people also gathered together for meals on that occasion. When every one had taken his food, the Guru wished to put the string of beads round the boy's neck, but he refused to put it on. On enquiring into the cause of his refusal, the boy said, "This necklace is of no use to me. Its beads are of wood and they are strung on a cotton thread, which is liable to break. Put a necklace of God's Name round my neck so that I may repeat God's Name to obtain real bliss. When the Guru heard this he kept the necklace with him and went away to his abode. His father scolded him and advised him to reconsider his decision but he remained firm in his belief.\*

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\* See Macauliff's *Sikh Religion Vol: VI Page 102.*



On the third day Diwan Chhaju Ram went again to his Guru and entreated him to put the string of beads on his son. The Guru replied "Diwan Ji, I haven't got the particular necklace which Nand Lal has asked for, and so it will be better to leave him free to select another spiritual guide." This silenced Chhaju Ram. He returned home and dropped the matter for ever.

## DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

Bhai Nand Lal became an accomplished scholar of Persian and Arabic, and acquired a great perfection in poetry. The charm of his poetry spread his fame far and wide. When he was nineteen, his father passed away, while his mother had died a couple of years before. Bhai Nand Lal had hardly any relations left there, except two or three from his mother's side, for a mutual exchange of civilities.

When Bhai Nand Lal had performed the funeral ceremonies of his father according to the prevailing customs of that country, he went to the Nawab with a request to grant him his father's post. But the Nawab said "Your father was an old and experienced Diwan, while you are still too young to hold that high office. You should first take up some junior post and therein gain



experience. In due course of time you will get your father's post." This did not satisfy Bhai Nand Lal. He left the Nawab in anger, vowing never to see him again and made up his mind to leave Ghazni for ever.

## MIGRATION TO MULTAN.

Diwan Chhaju Ram had possessed great property and wealth which was invested with different persons at the time of his death. After realizing all the dues Bhai Nand Lal converted all his property into cash. He employed two faithful servants. A caravan of Pathans was ready to leave for Multan. The head of the caravan was a friend of Bhai Nand Lal's father who promised to take Bhai Nand Lal along with him to Multan.

After one month the caravan made preparations to leave for Multan and Bhai Nand Lal also loaded two mules with luggage, and himself rode a third one and accompanied by his two servants, started with the party.

After a long, wearisome march, Bhai Nand Lal reached Multan, where he took leave of the party and put up with his two servants in the town. But as the town was densely populated, he did not like to reside within the four walls. One day he came



out of the city for a walk towards the Delhi gate. In the open ground in front of the gate he saw a well; close to which there were two or three houses of *khatries*. He talked for a while with the people living there and then thought of shifting to the same place. He bought some land and built on it a spacious and beautiful house for himself. He persuaded some other people to build houses in the vicinity and even gave money on loan to some poor men for building their houses there. In this way many Hindus and Mohammadans bought lands, built houses and began to settle there. After some time the population of this settlement increased, and it was named *Aghapura*, Bhai Nand Lal being called *Agha* by his Ghazni servants.

## MARRIAGE.

A *khatri* resident of that quarter finding Bhai Nand Lal to be young and a man of wealth and learning, gave his daughter to him in marriage. He and his wife both began to pass their days happily. His wife was very obedient and dutiful, and was well up in household work.

Up to the age of twenty one he did not believe in any particular religion. But his wife and her parents were followers of Guru Nanak. They all



recited Guru Nanak's hymns. There was a gurdwara of a Bedi Sikh very near, which is now called the Dharamsala of Bawa Kahanpat. The parents of his wife daily went there for service and by and by Bhai Nand Lal also began to acquire a taste for the Guru's Word, and became a follower of Guru Nanak. He learnt Gurmukhi characters and after some time he got much of *Gurbani* by heart.

## HIS LITERARY WORKS.

Bhai Nand Lal at the same time kept himself busy in literature and wrote many books in Persian. He wrote eight books, out of which two 'Tausif-o-Sana' and 'Khatma' became very famous. The Tausif is wholly written in praise of the Sikh Gurus and is a master piece of Persian style. The *Khatma* is in praise of God and is full of learning and philosophy. Many people read them and took lessons in them as courses. My grandfather, Bhai Jes Ram, had learnt by heart both these books, and recited them daily after *Rahiras*, the evening prayer.

In these days the works of Bhai Nand Lal like other Persian books are not popular. But in the days of Bhai Sahib these books were very famous and as there were no Government schools many



people came to him for taking lessons in Persian. His descendents continued to perform this duty of teaching Persian to Hindus even in the time of the British Government. It is not uncommon in Multan to come across very old retired Government servants still bowing their heads before the window of the room where they received their lessons in Persian from Bhai Jes Ram, the well-known Persian scholar, and one of the descendents of Bhai Nand Lal.

## THE BHAI AS A MIR MUNSHI.

In those days Multan was a part of the territory of Kabul, and a Governor appointed by the King of Kabul ruled there. When the Governor heard about Bhai Nand Lal he called him and was pleased to learn all about him. He made him his Mir Munshi.

On account his being a good Persian scholar and a highly intellectual man, he pleased the Governor so much that he received greater honour than most of the other Munshis. This roused a great jealousy in the minds of his colleagues who began to make false complaints against him. Bhai Nand Lal resigned his post after five or six years' service.



## BIRTH OF SONS & MIGRATION TO AGRA.

At the age of forty a son was born to him who was named Lakhpat Rai. Two years later another son was born. He was named Lila Ram.

When the elder son was five years and the younger one three years old, he got tired of Multan. He placed his sons and wife with his parents-in-law, and leaving a great property for them bade good-bye to Multan. Of the two servants he had brought from Ghazni one he left with his children and the other he took along with him. He reached Lahore and stayed there for some days. After a passing view of Amritsar and other big towns in the way, he reached Anandpur to pay his homage to Guru Gobind Singh. After getting permission from the Guru he went to Agra.

In those days Bahadur Shah, the elder son of Aurangzeb was the Governor of Agra and all this territory was under his control. Bhai Nand Lal composed a long eulogic poem in praise of the King and recited it before the Prince in his court. The Prince was much pleased to hear it and enquired all about him. Bhai Nand Lal related the whole story of migrating from Ghazni, and Bahadur Shah was pleased to invite him to his court next day.



Accordingly Bhai Nand Lal went to the court where the Prince offered him a seat with great respect. The Prince talked with him and afterwards offered the post of Mir Munshi to him, which he accepted very gladly.

Bhai Nand Lal performed the duties of this important post with great integrity and diligence. When his official notes reached Delhi, they were greatly appreciated by the officials of the Imperial Government.

After some time the Emperor Aurangzeb made a tour to Agra, and he and his troops halted there. A royal Darbar was held and many attended it. The next day lectures were delivered by preachers in a religious gathering and every effort was made to please the Emperor.

Aurangzeb doubted the correct interpretation of an *Ayat* in *Quran*. He had consulted many learned men about it, but none could explain it to his satisfaction. Seeing a large religious gathering attended by learned men and scholars, he placed that *Ayat* for explanation before them and every one tried to explain it according to his ability, but no one could clear the doubts of the King. He also asked his son, Bahadur Shah, to explain it. He said that he would try if some time was given



to him. The King allowed him eight days and the meeting was dispersed.

Bahadur Shah thought over that *Ayat*, but he could not arrive at any satisfactory explanation. He sent for Qazis and Maulanas and even they could not interpret it correctly. Bahadur Shah vowed not to eat and drink until he got a solution. Bhai Nand Lal inquired into the cause of his dejection, and Bahadur Shah related to him the whole story. Bhai Nand Lal said that it was an ordinary thing. He interpreted the *Ayat* in such a way as to remove all possible doubts. Bahadur Shah was pleased to learn this and his anxiety was removed.

On the eighth day Bahadur Shah went to the court of Aurangzeb. Many learned men and scholars were present. The King reminded him of the *Ayat*, the explanation of which he had promised to give after eight days. Bahadur Shah at once explained the *Ayat* to the satisfaction of the King and to the pleasure of all present. The King asked Bahadur Shah if that explanation was his own. He spoke the truth, saying that the credit for correctly interpreting the *Ayat* was rightly due to his Mir Munshi. The Mir Munshi was ordered to present himself in the court. Bhai



Nand Lal went before the Emperor. The King in order to test him asked him again the meaning of the *Ayat*. The interpretation was so beautifully given that the King was convinced. Aurangzeb gave Bhai Nand Lal a prize of Rupees five hundred, and he departed. Then Aurangzeb told his son that such a learned scholar should not remain a Hindu but should be at once converted to Moham-madanism. Bahadur shah said, "All right," and kept this in his mind.

Next day Bahadur Shah increased the pay of Bhai Nand Lal and began to pay him more respect than before. After a few days he disclosed the secret that it was the King's order that he should be converted to Islam. Bhai Nand Lal was struck with surprise and became silent; he, however, told the Prince that he would let him know his decision after a while.

There was a man named Ghias-ud-Din, Darogha of the court, who was rather intimate with Bhai Nand Lal, and used to discuss religious topics with him. Bhai Nand Lal always thought him to be his friend and the Darogha always regarded the Bhai to be his religious instructor. The Bhai sent for him and told him that Bahadur Shah wanted to convert him to Islam. He also



told him that he had no desire then to live there under those circumstances. Ghias-ud-Din had complete faith in him, he wept and said that he would follow him wherever he went. But the Bhai paused a while and told him that if he accompanied him they would both be soon caught, and therefore it was expedient for him to leave the place that night and if the Darogha wanted to meet him again he could do so after a few days at Lahore by taking leave from the Prince.

### AT ANANDPUR.

At last Bhai Nand Lal left the place secretly that very night and taking swift and long marches reached Lahore in about a week and put up in a *Sarai*. Next day his servant of Ghazni died, and his funeral rites were performed at Lahore.

When the Prince came to know that the Bhai had gone away he searched for him all round, but no trace could be found. After four days Ghias-ud-Din also took one month's leave and met the Bhai at Lahore. Bhai Nand Lal was in a state of sorrow for the death of his faithful servant and on seeing Ghias-ud-Din he again picked up courage.

Bhai Nand Lal went to Anandpur with Ghias-ud-Din. He obtained a lodging and took rest.



Early in the morning next day he took his bath, put on a clean dress and presented himself at the Guru's Darbar. This was about the year 1741-42 and the age of Bhai Nand Lal was forty one or forty two.

Bhai Nand Lal had brought some offerings for the Guru. He presented his offerings and was greatly delighted at obtaining the sight of the Guru. Ghias-ud-Din also presented fifty gold mohars and bowed and sat. Bhai Nand Lal and Ghias-ud-Din both related their accounts of what had happened to them. The Guru asked Ghias-ud-Din if he had adopted a *murshid*.

On this Ghias-ud-Din pointed out Bhai Nand Lal. The Guru was pleased and smiled. At that time a Sikh who was near by said to him that it was improper for him to talk like this in presence of the Satguru. At this the Guru said to the Sikh "Ghias-ud-Din is the disciple of Bhai Nand Lal and that latter is my disciple which means that both are my disciples." The Guru gave them a good loading and told them to serve the Guru's Sangat.

Ghias-ud-Din left for Agra, as his one month's leave was over and Bhai Nand Lal remained there. On his departure he promised not to disclose the secret of Bhai Nand Lal's being at Anandpur.



Bhai Nand Lal began to reside at Anandpur, performing the Guru's service, and gradually became familiar with the practice of the Darbar and was ready to do anything which the Guru ordered him to do.

In those days there were many poets with the Guru and they used to translate old religious books. Bhai Nand Lal put many questions to the Guru about Sikh religion in order to remove his doubts and was satisfied.

Bhai Nand Lal also composed a book of poems and named it Bandgi Nama. The book contains the doctrines of the Sikh Religion, besides discourses on the devotion to the Guru and God, knowledge of God, meditation, Jog, Vairag and prayers etc. The poetry of the book is very attractive and impressive. This book Bhai Nand Lal presented to the Guru. He was to explain and interpret the verses of the book daily at the Diwan and this was done as ordered by the Guru. After some time when the book was finished the Guru in great pleasure asked the Bhai Sahib about the name of the book, to which he answered 'Bandgi Nama'. The Guru changed the name to 'Zindgi Nama' and wrote the following verse at the end of the book.

“Zab-i-haivan pur shuda choan-iam-i a



Zindgi Nama shuda zan nam-i-o".

"As this cup is full of the life-giving nectar it is to be called the Zindgi Nama or the Book of Life."

The Guru having written this verse said whosoever reads this book with love will purify his human life. He also received the title of 'Bhai' from that day, and his book is allowed to be recited in the Golden Temple, Amritsar, though beside the Guru's Word no other man's verses are permitted to be sung within that holy temple of the Sikhs, except those of Bhai Gurdas.

Bhai Nand Lal acquired such a deep love for the presence of the Guru, that he never cared for his home, his wife and children. They were looked after by his parents-in-law. There was no such postal and railway arrangements as we have in these days, so every month a mutual exchange of news could be had by a messenger.

When the Guru came to know of the two sons of Bhai Nand Lal at Multan, he sent for the Bhai telling him that he would write to his Sikhs at Multan to look after the two boys and to make offerings to them and treat the offerings as having reached the Guru. But the Bhai requested the Guru that it had been their ancestral profession to



earn their livelihood by serving Nawabs and Rajas, so he did not wish to make his sons loafers; they only required the Guru's kind attention. The Guru was pleased to hear it and blessed him.

His love for the sight of the Guru had reached such a pitch that he was not even satisfied by seeing the Guru daily. The Guru was also pleased with him., and his discourses were a pleasure to him. The Bhai in his turn was so enamoured of the Guru that he composed verses about the Guru in whichever mood he saw him. When he unfortunately could not have a view of him, he would describe his restlessness in poems which he would afterwards recite before the Guru.

At Anandpur the Guru had opened free kitchens for the poor and the needy and Bhai Nand Lal also was in charge of one of them. One day the Sikhs fell into a discussion as to which of the kitchens was serving better. The news of this quarrel reached the Guru and he made up his mind to hold a secret test of them all. One day he disguised himself and went to a kitchen and said that he was hungry and wanted some food. The Sikhs serving in one of the kitchens said that the food was not yet ready, that if he would wait for some time he would get it. Then the Guru went



to another kitchen and asked for food. The manager of the kitchen said that if he only waited for other people to come round, he could eat along with them. Then he went to the third and asked for something to eat but they said that food would be distributed after grace was said. In this way all kitchen managers refused him food, making different excuses. But when the Guru went to the kitchen of Bhai Nand Lal he offered cooked articles of food in whatever form they were and said that "That much was ready and other things would be ready shortly." The Guru carried away the things and kept them in one place. Then at the evening Diwan he himself started a talk about the kitchens asking which kitchen served better than others. Answers from the men in charge did not satisfy the Guru and he said that Bhai Lal's kitchen was the only one of its kind where people were fed freely. He also said that he had himself gone that morning to all kitchens and begged for food but all except Bhai Nand Lal had made evasive excuses. He sent for the articles obtained from Bhai Nand Lal's kitchen and showed them to all the Sikhs. They were all surprised and felt ashamed of their conduct. The Guru then instructed them to satisfy the wants of any man that came to them at any time and not to send him back without giving him something.



In this way Bhai Nand Lal served the Guru up to the age of seventy two years and breathed his last at the feet of the Guru and made the best use of his life.

Out of the two sons of Bhai Nand Lal, Diwan Lakpat Rai died childless, while Diwan Lila Ram's descendents live at Aghapura to the present day, holding respectable posts in Government and Bahawalpur State service.

It would not be out of place to mention that *Takhalus* of Bhai Nand Lal was "Goya", a speaker, meaning thereby that it was some one else who made him speak, he himself could have done nothing.

His eight works are as follows :—

1. Dastur-ul-Insha—contains instructions about letter-writing in Persian with a number of model letters for various occasions.

2. Arz-ul-Alfaz:—a vocabulary of different words and phrases of Arabic.

3. Tausif-o-Sana a prose book with some poems at the end—is composed of very difficult expressions and phrases in Persian and Arabic.



4. Khatmah——is a poem in Persian written in praise of God and contains Persian and Arabic terminology of the worldly things and is a very scholarly book.

5. Jot Bigas wa Mujmna Anwar——is a poem in Persian. It tells how the soul of Guru Nanak transmigrated into the bodies of the next nine Gurus and how it worked according to the age and time.

6. Zindgi Nama——contains rules of the life of a Sikh.

7. Ganj Nama——contains praises of the ten Gurus and is partly in prose and is partly in verse.

8. Diwan Goya——contains poems of Bhai Nand Lal in praise of Guru Gobind Singh.

The books Nos. 5, 6 and 8 have been translated into Panjabi and have been published by my father, Bhai Megh Raj Ji, late Government Pensioner and famous Hakim and Persian scholar of Muzaffargarh. The translations named "Prem Samundar", "Prem Sarowar" and "Prem Phalwari" can be had in the market.



## EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BHAI NAND LAL.

The following are extracts from Zindgi Nama or 'Bestower of eternal life':

Both worlds here and hereafter are filled with God's light ;

The Sun and Moon are merely servants who hold his torches.\*

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If, my friend, thou associate with the holy, thou shall obtain abiding wealth.

---

Evil is that society from which evil resulteth; and which will all last bring sorrow in its train.

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As far as may be, remain servants, and claim not to be Master.\*

A servant ought not to search for aught but service.

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\* *This was addressed to those who held the sun and moon to be gods and objects of worship.*

\* *Some Vedantists with their pantheistic ideas crown to be God himself.*



Hence, my friend, thou oughtest to distinguish between thyself and God. Even if thou art united with Him, utter not one word which doth not express thy subjection to Him. When Mansur said, I am God, they put his head on the gibbet.

---

This heart of thine, O man, is God's temple. What shall I say? This is God's ordinance.

---

Though thy Lord and converseth with thee, Yet through thy stupidity thou runnest in every direction to find Him.

---

The Omnipotent is manifested by his omnipotence.

---

Sweetness trickleth from the words of the holy; the water of life drippeth from every hair of their bodies.

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The saints are the same without and within; both words are subject to their orders.

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They who search for God are ever civil.

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Courtesy pointeth out the way that leadeth to God. The discourteous are beyond God's kindness\*



In the following extract from from Bhai Nand Lal's **Diwan Goya**, a clear distinction is drawn between God and man:—

Although the wave and the ocean both consist of water, yet there is a great difference between them. I am one wave of Thee who art an endless sea. Thou art as distinct from me as heaven is from earth.

---

\* *After the death of Aurenqzeh Bhai Nand Lal found a patron in his son the Emperor Bahadur Shah, under whom he found leisure to write his works on the Sikh religion.*